For Immediate Release

Sarah Diaz

California WIC Association

(530) 276-1388

sdiaz@calwic.org

**WIC Serving Families During Pandemic**

**USDA has extended waivers allowing WIC to serve families remotely during the COVID-19 Pandemic**

Sacramento, California – On September 21st, the U.S. Department of Agriculture announced that they would extend waivers that allow for more flexibility during the COVID-19 pandemic until thirty days after the end of the nationally-declared public health emergency. This means that the WIC program will continue to be allowed to serve participants remotely via telephone, text or videoconference, remotely load WIC benefits onto WIC cards, and allow for flexibility in the WIC food package in case of supply or shortage issues.

After the start of the pandemic, WIC agencies moved quickly to continue to serve families while keeping both families and WIC staff safe. WIC directors from around California report that delivering WIC services remotely has been very well-received by participants, and due to the economic impacts of the pandemic, WIC agencies are seeing more participants than ever. “The [USDA] waivers mean everything when trying to keep pregnant women and young families safe and fed. Nobody should have to make a hard decision between having enough to eat and risking going to the WIC clinic,” said Debra Wilson, Senior Nutritionist at Nevada County WIC.

Shortly after the US Department of Agriculture announced the extension of the waivers, the House of Representatives advanced a continuing resolution to fund the government through December 11th, which was approved by the Senate and signed by President Trump on September 30th. The continuing resolution also includes an extra $8 billion for child nutrition programs, and authority for the USDA to extend WIC waivers through September 2021. The additional authority provided by the continuing resolution provides greater flexibility, as USDA can now approve new waivers and issue additional extensions should the public health emergency declaration prematurely expire.

###

The California WIC Association is the non-profit member organization for local WIC agencies. Our mission is to lead California communities to nourish, educate, support, and empower families in building a healthy future. We do so by promoting WIC and related services, including breastfeeding support, nutrition education, health care, family and employee wellness, and public health workforce development. Learn more at [www.calwic.org](http://www.calwic.org).